ExcELlence In...

English Language Learners (ELLs) whose teachers completed a preservice preparation program infused with an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) endorsement achieved higher scores in reading and mathematics on the Florida statewide assessment as compared with ELLs whose teachers did not complete the 5-year infused ESOL endorsement program.

Read on to learn more about the Project DELTA research findings and the steps state and federal education agency administrators can take to build on these results.

About Project Delta
Project DELTA (Developing English Language through Teacher Achievement) at the University of Florida is a federally funded research project designed to study the link between elementary teacher preparation and ELL achievement in inclusive classrooms.

Quality Preparation Programs for Teachers of ELL Students

Florida’s ESOL-infused teacher education programs typically concentrate ESOL competencies in two or three courses and reinforce these competencies throughout other courses. What is it about ESOL-infused preservice programs that results in teacher effectiveness and perceptions of efficacy and preparedness to work with ELLs?

Project DELTA researchers engaged in a comprehensive study to understand what is most important in preparing teachers to work effectively with ELLs. They used a number of data sources—observations, surveys, and interviews with teacher education graduates—to add multiple perspectives to quantitative analyses of teacher characteristics and ELL academic performance.

Research Findings
ELLs whose teachers completed a preservice teacher preparation program with an infused ESOL endorsement showed higher learning outcomes on academic achievement measures than those ELLs whose teachers did not complete the infused ESOL endorsement program. Research findings indicate that graduates of a 5-year elementary education preparation program with an infused ESOL endorsement:

- Make a positive contribution to ELL achievement in reading and mathematics as measured on state standardized tests.
- Make a positive contribution to ELL achievement in Title I schools with low-income, low-performing student populations.
- Feel well prepared and effective in their ability to create inclusive learning environments and provide comprehensible instruction for ELLs by using effective strategies to teach reading and academic content.

Policy Recommendations
Given the growing number of ELLs and the current emphasis on student achievement—as well as the findings of this research showing a positive
The role of language in teaching and learning for ELLs matters. Teachers need:

- Knowledge of how English works and the ability to teach it.
- Ability to integrate both English language development and content learning into instruction.
- Ability to use ELLs’ native languages as instructional resources (e.g., in grouping students for peer interaction, communicating with parents, etc.).

Based on Project DELTA findings and supported by other educational research on teacher preparation for ELLs, recommendations for state and federal education agency administrators include:

- Develop statewide policies that require comprehensive ELL preparation of all teachers and other educators (e.g., school leaders) through preservice and inservice professional development.
- Make ELL-specific knowledge and skills an integral part of teacher preparation programs.
- Establish a program approval process that requires infused teacher preparation programs to document how course content focuses on ELLs and how teacher candidates are provided with sufficient structured opportunities to work with ELLs in meaningful ways in multiple settings.
- Encourage and support teacher preparation programs for ELLs that provide candidates with opportunities to: (1) identify and engage in content and language/literacy instructional practices with ELLs in inclusive classrooms; (2) interact with ELLs in meaningful ways in typical classroom settings; (3) develop grammatical competence (e.g., understanding how language works, is structured, and used for different purposes) and apply it when planning and implementing curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices for ELLs; and (4) leverage school- and community-based resources.
- Require teacher evaluation systems to include effective practices for ELLs, keeping in mind that student achievement is mediated by multiple variables (e.g., English proficiency, migrant status, instructional programs, school-based reforms, etc.).
- Do not preclude the preparation and role of ESOL specialists who collaboratively provide expertise in instruction and specialized resources to support intensive English language and literacy development for ELLs.

For More Information
Read more about the research—as well as read articles and view PowerPoint presentations—on the Project DELTA website (http://education.ufl.edu/project-delta/).